

# WORLD PLACER JOURNAL

World Placer Journal - 2006 - Volume 6 [ABSTRACT]

## Gold recovery in bowls in Mongolia - the term 'bowling'

**Chimed-Erdene Baatar<sup>1</sup>**

(1) Eco-Minex International

(1) [chamia\\_mongolia@yahoo.uk](mailto:chamia_mongolia@yahoo.uk)

### ABSTRACT

*A classic paper describing the intensive use of green plastic bowls by artisanal miners of Mongolia - in sharp preference to gold pans!*



**GREEN BOWL of Mongolia's ninja miners.** Cheap, light, portable and much faster at recovering gold than the traditional gold pan of North America. (photos: Garrie Pixerten and Enkhbold Sumiya)



**CROUCHING - using the green bowl demands much effort.** Panning tends to be a group activity of men, women and children, often clustering due to the scarcity of water for panning. (photo: William Murray of Murray Harrison Associates)

The article describes the remarkable affection of artisanal gold miners of Mongolia for the green plastic bowl. The ratio of green bowls to pans is greater than 1,000:1, and of green bowls to Siberian lotoks also greater than 1,000:1.

The green bowl is distinctive in being circular with a flat floor that curves steadily to merge into the very steep perimeter wall. The rim is extended as an outward-facing ledge for strength, and the bottom of the pan may be underlain by strengthening struts.

The people's gold rush in Mongolia is poverty-driven, mainly destitute herder households who lost their livestock in harsh winters ('dzud') and other natural calamities. Herders do not fry food so households rarely have frying pans and so lack the pans to go panning with. But all have washing-up bowls.

The article examines the reasons for the total rejection of North American gold pans by the artisanal miners of Mongolia in favour of green bowls, and similar rejection of Siberian lotok trays. However, many of the artisanal miners use ribbed rubber mats in conjunction with the green bowls/

Washing-up bowls seem to be used by artisanal miners in many regions of the world, but the author is unaware of bowls being used on such a scale or so ubiquitously as in Mongolia. The term 'bowling' is proposed in order to give proper recognition of this process, to ensure technical assessment and to prevent the process being lost in the overused blanket term of panning. Bowling probably has wide application for artisanal and small-scale miners (ASM) in recovering not only placer gold but also alluvial tin (cassiterite), alluvial diamonds and alluvial gems such as rubies, sapphires and emeralds.



**GOLD! - in the black sand in a bowl.** The miner is standing in the Tuul River, and recovered about 20 USD of gold from a sack of gravel dug out of the terrace. (photo: Robin Grayson)

Bowling requires less physical effort than bucketing, and eliminates the cost of a purpose-made gold pan. More importantly the green bowl is easier to carry, holds more material, holds more water and has a higher volume throughput than a North American gold pan. Like the modern North American gold pan, the bowl cannot be used as a digging tool. However, being a washing-up bowl, the green bowl is better suited for carrying water and gravel for a few paces.



**WINTER MINING - even at minus 25 centigrade and below.** Heating the panning water with a kerosene blow-lamp. (photo: William Murray of Murray Harrison Associates)

[DOWNLOAD THIS ABSTRACT](#)

[GO TO NEXT ABSTRACT](#)

[www.mine.mn](http://www.mine.mn)



[editor@mine.mn](mailto:editor@mine.mn)

Copyright © 2000-2007  
Eco-Minex International Co Ltd, Ulaanbaatar  
Last modified: April 19, 2007



[CLICK TO VIEW OUR TERMS & CONDITIONS OF USING THE CONTENT OF THIS WEB-SITE](#)